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ABSTRACT

Research has reported relationships between fear of success and fear of failure and between fear of success and various sex-role identity factors. These relationships were examined for undergraduates (N=154) using the Fear of Success Scale (FOSS) to measure fear of success, the Debilitating Anxiety Scale (DAS) to measure fear of failure, and the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) to assess sex-role orientation. Results indicated a moderate correlation between FOSS and DAS scores, suggesting a relationship between fear of success and fear of failure. This relationship was stronger for females than for males. The findings suggest that fear of success is a sex-role related construct, while fear of failure is a gender-related construct. (Author/NRB)

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RELATIONSHIPS AMONG FEAR OF SUCCESS, FEAR OF
FAILURE, AND ANDROGYNY

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association,
New York, NY, April 22-25, 1981.

1. Title: Relationships among fear of success, fear of failure, and androgyny.
2. Topical Session: 1. Sex differences, 2. Androgyny, 3. Motivation
3. Problem:

Investigations of fear of success have been numerous since Horner (1969) introduced the concept in 1968 using a thematic cue approach to study achievement motivation. Tressemer's (1976) review reported that findings are equivocal in determining if the trait appears more often in women than in men.

As interest in the construct of fear of success has grown, new methods of measuring it have been developed. Griffore (1977) reported a positive correlation between the Fear of Success Scale (FOSS) developed by Zuckerman and Allison (1976) and Pappo's Fear of Success Questionnaire (FOS) (1972). Neither of these instruments (FOSS and FOS) correlated with Horner's (Note 1) empirically derived fantasy-based scoring system for fear of success measurement. Griffore found, however, that all three correlated positively with fear of failure as measured by Alpert and Haber's Debilitating Anxiety Scale (DAS) (1960), a part of the Achievement Anxiety Test (AAT). Griffore's (1977) finding supports other research that suggests the difficulty of differentiating between the constructs of fear of success and fear of failure (Jackaway & Teevan, 1976; Sadd, Lenauer, Shaver and Dunivant, 1978).

Current research indicates that fear of success is related to sex-role identify factors such as sex-role orientation, sex-role traditionalism, and role overload (Bremer & Wittig, 1980; Carballero, Giles & Shaver, 1975; Major, 1979). Major (1979) found a significant correlation between the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (1974) and a modified version of

Horner's (1969) original fear of success measure. Major's (Note 2) revision of the Horner scale correlated positively ($r = .43$) with Horner's original projective measure.

The purpose of the present study is to confirm (a) Griffore's finding of a relationship between fear of success as measured by Zuckerman and Allison's FOSS and fear of failure as measured by Alpert and Haber's DAS, in a sample with different attributes, (b) to assess the relationship between the sex role categories defined by the BSRI (masculine, feminine, undifferentiated and androgynous), and fear of success (FOSS), and fear of failure (DAS), and (c) to assess the relationship between the BSRI subscale scores (masculine, feminine, neutral) and FOSS and DAS.

4. Subjects:

Subjects were 108 male and 46 female undergraduate students enrolled in general psychology classes at a technically oriented, private university.

5. Procedure:

Subjects completed two questionnaires. The first contained all items from the FOSS and DAS instruments listed in random order. The second questionnaire administered was the BSRI. A 7-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (strong disagreement) to 7 (strong agreement) was the response continuum for both questionnaires.

6. Results:

A Pearson correlation was computed over all subjects to assess the relationship between the FOSS and DAS. The resulting coefficient, $r = .45$, was significant at the .001 level. Correlations were then computed separately for males and females. The correlation between FOSS and DAS for females was $r = .62$ and for males was $r = .35$, both significant

at the .001 level.

The BSRI Masculine, Feminine and Neutral subscale scores were computed for all subjects (Bem, 1974). The difference/median split procedure, as described by Orlofsky, Aslin, and Ginsburg (1977), was used to classify individuals into sex role categories based on their Masculine and Feminine subscale scores.

FOSS was regressed on sex of subject and Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral subscale scores. FOSS was then regressed on sex of subject and masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated sex role categories. Similarly, DAS was regressed on these two sets of variables.

Now, if you'll look at table 1, of the handout, we'll walk through the results of this analysis. The multiple R of .17 in the first line obtained with FOSS as the criterion and the sex role categories and sex as predictors was not significant. Using the same predictors and DAS as the criterion, the multiple R of .27 was significant at the .05 level. The order of entry of the predictors in the equations is depicted by the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4. Using the BSRI subscale scores as predictors resulted in a multiple R of .21 for FOSS, significant at the .05 level; and .31 for DAS, significant at the .01 level. Again, the order of entry of the predictors is given in the table.

7. Implications and Conclusions:

The moderate correlation between FOSS and DAS confirmed Griffiore's (1977) finding of a relationship between the constructs fear of success (FOSS) and fear of failure (DAS). This confirmation was found in a sample with different characteristics than the sample used by Griffiore. Moreover, the relationship was found to be stronger for females than for males.

In general the regression analyses show that the Masculine and Neutral subscale scores on the BSRI predict both fear of success (FOSS) and fear of failure (DAS). For the DAS, however, the sex of the subject was the most predictive variable. This suggests that fear of success is a sex role related construct while fear of failure is a gender related construct. The moderate relationship between fear of success and fear of failure ($r = .45$) would probably have been stronger if these constructs were both either sex role related or both gender related. Predictability of FOSS and DAS was lower when sex role categories from BSRI were used as independent variables rather than the subscale scores. This finding is consistent with Bem's (1977) suggestion that information about the strength of the subjects' sex role orientation is lost when subjects are classified into sex role categories.

8. References:

Reference Notes

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Table 1. Multiple R and order of entry of predictor variables for the Fear of Success Scale and the Debilitating Anxiety Scale using the Bem Sex Role Inventory categories and subscale scores.

R Criterion			Predictors			
		Sex	BSRI Sex Role Categories			
			Masc.	Fem.	Androg.	Undiff.
.17 ¹	FOSS	3	1	4	2	-
.27*	DAS	1	2	3	4	-

			BSRI Subscale Scores		
			Masc.	Fem.	Neutral
.21*	FOSS	-	1	-	2
.31**	DAS	1	2	-	3

1 N.S.

* p < .05

** p < .01